CONSIDERATIONS

ON

PAROCHIAL MUSIC,

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE principles of the following Tract are to be found in Dr. Brown's Treatiſe on Muſic; and all that is neceſſary for the preſent Subject, in the Extract of that Work publiſhed in the Annual Regiſter, 1763, vol. vi. The Author claims no Merit, but that of dilating Dr. Brown's Ideas, and introducing them again to public Notice, at a Seaſon more favourable for carrying them into execution.

CONSIDERATIONS

ON

PAROCHIAL MUSIC.

THE union of muſic with religious worſhip, has been ſo conſecrated by time and uſage, that we may well regard it as univerſal; for it would be difficult to point out any age or country, in which a ſyſtem of religion was eſtabliſhed, where it did not exiſt.

This union, as founded on the nature of man, is rational;—as ſanctified by the revelation of God, is religious. The Prophets, from Moſes to Malachi, adapted their inſpired compoſitions to the voice and the inſtrument;—the Pſalms of David are an everlaſting treaſure of harmony to the church; and the muſical ſervice of the temple was an eſtabliſhment of greater extent and magnificence than any other religion * has to boaſt.

* Lowth's Lectures.

Under the diſpenſation of the goſpel, we have the example of Chriſt, and the uninterrupted practice of the church to authorize the uſage, and ſuch authority conſtitutes a duty.

The uſe of muſic, is, to rouze and animate the affections, to warm the heart, to relieve laſſitude and lukewarmneſs in devotion, to convey our praiſe, prayer, adoration, and thankſgiving to the throne of grace; and to exhibit a ſervice upon earth, conformable to the miniſtry of Angels in Heaven.

According to the uſage of the Church of England, Muſic is either Cathedral or Parochial.

1. Cathedral Muſic being ſcientific, is confined to thoſe only who are maſters of the ſcience.

2. Parochial Muſic is deſigned for the people at large; it is therefore ſimple, intelligible, and eaſily attainable by the ear.

CATHEDRAL MUSIC.

THE example of the Jewiſh Church is ſufficient authority for the inſtitution of a choir ſeparate from the body of the people: for we may juſtly conclude, that what the Divine inſpiration has

has ſanctified under one diſpenſation, muſt be equally acceptable under another.

And though it is true, that in the primitive ages of the Chriſtian Church, no ſuch eſtabliſhment is diſcoverable; yet if we trace the courſe of things, we ſhall find that it was rather a natural progreſs or conſequence, than an abuſe, or intended encroachment on the rights of the people.

In the primitive Church the whole congregation was divided into two parts, or choirs, ſinging alternately * the verſes of their Hymns; or at other times, both united in anſwer to the miniſter.

To this cuſtom ſucceeded the practice of a ſingle voice taking a ſingle part, and the congregation joining in the cloſe. Theſe ſingle parts gradually became more refined, and varied either from the progreſs of the ſcience, or the emulation of the performer; and conſequently greater knowledge was required to execute them. The more individuals encreaſed in this knowledge, the farther were the people left behind, till at length they could no longer join at all, and the ſervice became peculiar to profeſſors.

* Bingham's Antiquities, book xiv. chap. 1 & 2. Pliny's Epiſ. to Trajun, Book x. ep. 97. Carmenque Chriſto, quaſi Deo, dicere ſecum *invicem*.

The Church of Rome during the long empire ſhe maintained, cheriſhed this mode of ſervice, as adding another diſtinction to thoſe already ſubſiſting between the Clergy and the Laity; but the reformers conſidered it as an injury done to the people, and one of their firſt attentions was to reſtore them to their ſhare in this duty, and to furniſh means for effecting the change.

For this purpoſe, the Pſalms were turned into metre, Hymns were compoſed, plain and popular tunes were adapted, and ſuch was the inclination of the people, that this mode of ſinging ſoon became a characteriſtic diſtinction of all that deſerted the Church of Rome; nor was the ſermon more eminently contraſted to the maſs, than the Hymn or Pſalm to Cathedral Muſic.

The warmth which attends all revolutions in ſentiments, ſoon carried the opinions on this head to extremes. In the countries where the reformed Religion took place, Cathedral Muſic was quickly deemed a badge of Anti-chriſt. The rights of the people were inſiſted on. The profeſſors were ſtigmatized for that very ſkill which conſtituted their excellence; and the Cathedrals themſelves were diſmantled.

But the moderation of the Church of England was as eminent on this point, as every other. On the

the one hand, Cathedral ſervice was ſupported, by refounding and annexing a Cathedral to each Biſhopric: on the other, the rights of the people were reſtored, by giving them a metrical verſion of the Pſalms, and by adapting a muſical compoſition to it, at once plain and ſolemn.

This ſyſtem of moderation we have hitherto no right to complain of; it has at leaſt been one cauſe of ſupporting thoſe venerable fabrics *, which do honour to a national Church, and the eſpecial means of promoting a ſcience, which, if we may judge from the preſent diſpoſition of the people, contributes to recommend Religon itſelf.

It was manifeſtly the deſign of our anceſtors about the time of the reformation, to have diffuſed a more general knowledge of Muſic among the Clergy, and by their means to have communicated it to the people. The ſtatutes of the Colleges in both Univerſities, and other Collegiate foundations, require a proficiency in this ſcience to

* At the time of the diſſolution of Abbies and Monaſteries, if a very ſmall portion of the lands had been reſerved for the maintenance of Cathedral ſervice, and ſupport of the fabric, thoſe noble buildings which are now the ſtanding monuments of rapacity and deſolation, might have continued to this day, ornaments to the kingdom. Whatever the inhabitants of thoſe buildings deſerved, the buildings themſelves were conſecrated to God.

to be attended to; and though theſe ſtatutes are now ſo completely obſolete, as to furniſh no hopes of again enforcing them, it is probably owing to the neglect on this head, that Parochial Muſic has fallen into decay and contempt.

That the body of the Clergy ſhould ever be reſtored to the attainment of this ſcience, by the ordinary courſe of their education, is not now to be expected; but as the ſcience itſelf is every day more diffuſed, and its uſe, value, and eſtimation every day better underſtood, it is not improbable that the Clergy may again become the means of recommending it to the people, and the people be perſuaded of the pleaſure and advantage to be derived from it.

PAROCHIAL MUSIC.

PAROCHIAL Muſic is at preſent confined to Pſalmody, which, from the general manner of performing it, is become an object of diſguſt, inſtead of rational delight and edification. To point out the cauſe of this, is the firſt ſtep towards the remedy.

The general cauſe is, the indolence, or backwardneſs of the congregation, which reſtrains them from joining in this part of the ſervice; and this

this has introduced an attempt towards a remedy, which is worſe than the evil.

This conſiſts principally of two parts, which ſhall be denominated *abuſes*, not in a bad ſenſe, but as a perverted uſe of a good practice.

The firſt is, the Select Band of the country Church.

The ſecond, the Charity Children in the Metropolis.

The firſt of theſe abuſes cannot be better deſcribed than in the following words,—" * Here " devotion is loſt between the impotent vanity " of thoſe who ſing, and the ignorant wonder " of thoſe who liſten;" and it is really matter of aſtoniſhment that either the miniſter, or the better part of the congregation have ſuffered this evil to encreaſe to the extent it has: that at the ſame time both complain that their ears are wounded with diſſonance, and their ideas degraded to ridicule; neither the miniſter has exerted his influence, or the congregation claimed their right, but have tamely ſuffered themſelves to be precluded from a duty ſpecially their own, and the ſervice to be lengthened, (as it ſometimes is unreaſonably) by a practice that adds tenfold to the tedium of it.

The

* Dr. Brown.

The common excuſe is, that theſe men would not come to Church at all, if this inducement was withdrawn; the anſwer is plain; if all joined, all would have the inducement; and for one that would be loſt, ten would be gained; and if the ſeceſſion of thoſe who compoſe the band, conſtitutes the difficulty, that will be conſidered hereafter.

The abuſe in the metropolis is ſimilar in its nature, and equal in point of diſguſt. Charity children, it is true, are taught by maſters better qualified to form them for this ſervice; but whether theſe maſters cannot now depart from an eſtabliſhed cuſtom,—whether the error ariſes from the children themſelves, from their incapacity, from imitation, or emulation, the evil is equally to be complained of. They univerſally ſing at the utmoſt height of their voice; and fifty or an hundred trebles, ſtrained to their higheſt pitch, united to the roar of the full organ, can never raiſe admiration of the performers, or a ſenſe of devotion in the hearers; the diſguſt is general, and the complaint of the congregation, univerſal.

To this, perhaps, it will be anſwered, that the effect is juſt the reverſe in the general aſſembly of the charity children at St. Paul's. I grant it is. But ſtill it muſt be allowed the intent is alſo different. The devotion of a Parochial Congregation,

gation, and the ſenſations inſpired by an aſſembly like this, are perfectly diſtinct. The union of five thouſand trebles, raiſes admiration and aſtoniſhment. It is a Choir impoſſible to collect by any other means. Add to this, that a variety of other ideas go to make up the whole of our delight. Compaſſion, benevolence, and Chriſtian charity dilate the heart. Conſiderations of public utility engage the attention. Reflections upon the probable advantages accruing to ſo many human creatures reſcued from total ignorance, ſteal upon the mind; and the aggregate of theſe ſeveral feelings, contribute to render it one of the moſt heart-moving ſpectacles ever exhibited in this or any other country; conduct, order, and regularity crown the whole, and we are enraptured with a view that proclaims the triumph of benevolence and Religion.

But to return from this digreſſion, it is to be preſumed, that the Charity Children in London, and the Select Band in the Country, will be generally allowed to contribute nothing to devotion; and to obviate the diſguſt ariſing from theſe, two methods have been taken.

The firſt is, that adopted by ſome few chapels * in London and other places, where a band

* Portland Chapel, the Octagon Chapel in Bath; and ſome Churches, if I am rightly informed, in Lancaſhire.

is appropriated to chant the Pſalms, Te Deum, &c. and who are competent to perform an Anthem with ſufficient accuracy. This is a ſyſtem which partakes more of Cathedral, than Parochial ſervice. But as the inſtruction of the performers is not ſo ſcientific as to give it all the advantages of the former, it would perhaps be wiſer, if they could be brought to lead the congregation in the performance of a Muſical ſervice which all might partake in, than to aſſume a diſtinct ſhare to themſelves. A common chant is eaſily attainable by the ear; and if the ſame was always uſed, would ſoon become familiar to the audience, and all be inſenſibly led to join in it. A chant of this kind might not only become congregational, but national; for though variety may pleaſe when we conſider the performer only, ſtill if we conſider ourſelves as joining in the performance, facility is the primary object. And the attachment to national tunes, when once eſtabliſhed, inſtead of offending by ſameneſs, is always upon the encreaſe *. If ſuch a Band as this could be made ſubſervient to this purpoſe, it would contribute much more to edification, both in the ſervice, and the Pſalms, than their own ſeparate performance; and might point out the means

* The German Jews are ſaid to have a chant or intonation of this ſort which never varies. The Swiſs tune is too well known to need mentioning.

means of commencing and eſtabliſhing a mode of public ſervice, at once conſiſtent with the nature of the thing itſelf, and the practice of the primitive Church.

Another kind of remedy has been attempted in the Chapels of ſeveral hoſpitals and public charities in the metropolis, where the objects of the inſtitution, or the children have been taught by ear * only, to perform the muſical part of the ſervice, with ſufficient accuracy to attract and delight. The attraction is a ſufficient motive to make us approve the wiſdom of the directors, in adopting this plan. But it is at the ſame time a leſſon to us all; for it proves how much more affecting and delightful the ſervice of the Church is, when performed in this manner, and intimates how ſmall the difficulty would be, to obtain the ſame excellence in every congregation throughout the kingdom. So long as this excellence is attainable by the ear only, it is within the reach of every congregation, and it wants only method and order to acquire this, which, if a ſpirit was once raiſed to make the attempt, would follow of courſe. It is true there is ſometimes a particular voice in theſe Chapels to admire, and par-

 ticular

* This is not ſtrictly accurate in regard to the Foundling Hoſpital. The Aſylum appears to have obtained all that is deſirable in this point.

ticular compoſitions of a ſuperior caſt to attract. The managers err not in employing the one, or the other; ſo long as they confine themſelves within the decorum requiſite to a Proteſtant Church, they have a right to adapt compoſitions to the purpoſe of their inſtitution. But there is no prejudice in aſſerting that the general union of a Parochial congregation is ſuperior in effect even to this; for here each individual is a partaker, and not a hearer only. He is warming his heart and raiſing his affections by the performance of his own duty; he is giving glory to God in his own proper rank and ſtation, inſtead of purſuing the gratification which ariſes from a public performance, or a ſpectacle.

EXCELLENCE OF PAROCHIAL MUSIC.

" THE performance of Parochial Pſalms, " though in the villages it is often mean, yet " in the great towns, where a good organ is ſkil- " fully and devoutly employed by a ſenſible or- " ganiſt; the union of this inſtrument, with the " voices of a well inſtructed congregation, forms " one of the grandeſt ſcenes of an unaffected " piety, that human nature can afford."—Such are the ſentiments of a man * perfectly qualified to

* Dr. Brown.

to decide upon the ſubject; and no one reaſon can be given, why this bleſſing and delight ſhould not be extended throughout the Church of England. The preſent moment is perhaps more favourable for renewing the attempt, than any which has hitherto preſented itſelf in this country. A ſcientific knowledge of Muſic is more generally diffuſed than at any former period; the grand effects of the art are more generally acknowledged,—the great celebrities and numerous concerts in the Capital, the muſic meetings, oratorios, and concerts eſtabliſhed in the great country towns, have given a reliſh and excited a taſte in all the higher and middling ranks throughout the kingdom. And the univerſal prevalence of the taſte or *paſſion*, if we chuſe to ſtyle it ſuch, ſeems to inſpire a hope, that Muſic may once more be united with public worſhip, ſo as to anſwer all the beſt purpoſes of edification and devotion.

The execution of this deſign muſt finally reſt with the people; but as the firſt motion will never come from them, it will be no difficult task to point out the means by which they may be led to a duty, which tends ultimately to their own advantage and delight. That they are alive to feelings of this kind no other proof is wanting, than the attraction they all experience in the Pſalmody of the Methodiſts. It is not raſhneſs

to

to aſſert, that for one who has been drawn away from the Eſtabliſhed Church by Preaching, ten have been induced by Muſic. And many who have primarily had no other attraction, have, by their attendance on it, given an opportunity to have their affections eſtranged from the Eſtabliſhed Church, which they would not otherwiſe have been expoſed to.

We have no right to complain of this ſyſtem of the Methodiſts,—they fight with lawful weapons, for they are the ſame as the Reformers employed againſt the Church of Rome. And if we are ſenſible of the efficacy of them, why ſhould not we proportion our mode of defence, to the nature of the attack? We have none of the corruptions of the Church of Rome to preponderate againſt us, in the deciſion of this ſpiritual combat. Our cauſe is good, the citadel of our Faith is ſtrong; but we are to guard the outworks with jealouſy and circumſpection.

That the harmony ariſing from the voices of a well regulated Methodiſt Congregation is delightful, no one who has heard it, can deny. Let us not envy them the enjoyment of it, but draw our own inſtruction from it; and this we may readily do, by examining in what points their excellency conſiſts.

And here, though I profeſs to ſpeak ignorantly of Muſic as a ſcience, perhaps it will be generally acknowledged that the effect is produced, firſt, by the union of every voice in the aſſembly, (no one being negligent, inattentive, or remiſs;) ſecondly, by practice; and thirdly, by moderating the voice to the moſt harmonious pitch.

For, that it does not conſiſt in better Muſical compoſition, is evident. Their ſuperiority is as manifeſt in the performance of a common pſalm tune, as in any modern compoſition adapted to their own Hymns.

That it does not conſiſt in better voices, is equally plain, becauſe when the effect is moſt ſtriking, no particular voice is heard.

That it does not ariſe from greater previous ſkill, is eaſily proved; for they have no ſkill but practice, and pretend in general to no knowledge of the ſcience, but what they have acquired by the ear.

This knowledge ariſing from practice is all that is requiſite to form any congregation to equal excellence; whether the people of our Church will ſubmit to this, is the only doubt; but if there ever was a ſeaſon proper for trying the experiment, it is the preſent one;—the cauſe

is

is not hopeleſs, and even if it were, there is merit in the attempt.

MEANS OF RESTORING PAROCHIAL MUSIC.

THE ſure method of recalling Muſic to its priſtine rank in the public ſervice, is to inſpire the people with a belief that it would contribute to their comfort and advantage. That this is generally true, has been endeavoured to be proved in the preceding ſheets, but the mode of applying this particularly, muſt be by recommendations from the Clergy, and ſuperior part of the congregation; and the means of executing the deſign, muſt be forwarded by the Pariſh clerk, the Organiſt, and the Inſtructor.

To the Clergy I ſpeak with the utmoſt degree of deference, not preſuming to dictate to any, as each muſt beſt know the particular ſituation, temper, and wants of his own congregation. But I imagine there are few Clergymen on country benefices, who do not ſincerely lament the exiſtence of a Select Band in the gallery, and wiſh to remove it, by bringing the whole body of the people to perform their part.

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The country Clergyman has great advantages on this head; for where his character is reſpected, his advice has ever great weight. If it were an addition to the burthen of his paſtoral office, there are ſtill enough ready to undertake it; but if example and encouragement are the two chief points neceſſary, I can hardly conceive any one unwilling to try the experiment.

The firſt ſtep requiſite (and in this the chief difficulty conſiſts) is to collect a few creditable perſons to attend a practice after ſervice; it is poſſible that ſome of this deſcription, offended by the ordinary mode of ſinging, would liſten to the perſuaſions of their Miniſter on this head; or in pariſhes where there is no ſelect choir in the gallery, perhaps the buſineſs would be eaſier to induce the people to admit proper inſtruction from the beginning, than to correct a bad method where it has already taken place.

But ſuppoſing in either caſe that the Miniſter were inclined to favour a reformation; after this ſtep gained, the mode of conducting ſuch a practice is eaſily pointed out. For if the Minſter were poſſeſſed of Muſical abilities himſelf, ſufficient to direct (a ſuppoſition not unreaſonable in the preſent age) his preſence and example would reduce every thing into order.

If the Miniſter were not competent to this office, or ſhould deem it inconſiſtent with his rank and ſituation; his preſence only would be of equal ſervice. There are few villages ſo remote, as not to be within reach of ſome Muſical Inſtructor, and one who, at a ſmall price, would be glad to employ the Sunday to his profit. But for this office thoſe perſons are not meant, who go about the country as profeſſed teachers of Pſalmody, as from them and their method the very evil complained of originates. If, however, there are among theſe, any who know how to teach better, and teach in the preſent way only from compliance with habit and cuſtom, any that can ſubmit to correction or admonition, even theſe might be uſefully employed.

Some Miniſters will, doubtleſs, object to diſguſting their preſent Band; they will eſteem it driving one body of men from Church, before they are ſure of ſecuring the attendance of others; they will be deſirous of avoiding diviſions, and parties in their pariſh, and envious compariſons between the new and old method. But perhaps it is not impoſſible by diſcreet management, and gradual means, to make theſe very men leaders and conductors in the deſign; and by diſperſing them in different parts of the congregation, to employ them as directors of others, inſtead

ſtead of engroſſing the whole of this ſervice to themſelves, in a diſtinct gallery, or ſeat.

It is true that emulation is as prevalent in this rank of life, as every other; that the ruſtic in the performance of a rude anthem is animated by as much ambition as the beſt performer in the firſt Cathedral, and deems himſelf poſſeſſed of as much comparative excellence. To degrade him from this ſelf-elevation, is difficult, without diſguſting him: but it is not impoſſible, if another kind of pre-eminence is propoſed;—if he is ſhewn that he may become an inſtructor, a director, or leader of others, and if at the ſame time it is ſuggeſted that he is rendering a ſervice of Religion more acceptable to God and profitable to his fellow Chriſtians.

Much is not to be built upon the facility of this ſyſtem; but if the attempt was once made, many difficulties would vaniſh of themſelves in the execution; one of theſe is, the bringing theſe men who have conceived notions of their own ſkill and excellence, back to plain ſinging; to induce them to diſcard every kind of anthems, ſinging in parts, new and varied compoſitions; and if this were once effected, the bad habits of delivering the voice through the noſe, inſtead of the mouth, the unnatural ſhrillneſs of the upper voices, and the tone of provincial utterance

(which are the evils chiefly complained of) would be readily corrected by inſtruction and practice. One cannot readily account for the introduction of anthems, and varied compoſitions into the Parochial Service; it has certainly done no good, and as it throws the reſt of the congregation out of all poſſibility of partaking, it evidently does harm;—" * Our common Parochial Muſic needs " no reform, its ſimplicity and ſolemnity ſuit " well its general deſtination, and it is of power, " when properly performed, to raiſe affections " of the nobleſt nature."

† To reſtore this in its primitive purity, is doubtleſs an object with every one, who regards the decency of public ſervice. If then a Miniſter could once induce a very ſmall number to commence a *practice* under proper inſtruction, where nothing ſhould be attempted but what was attainable by ear, every pariſhioner might be invited to liſten; curioſity would draw ſome, religion induce others, delight affect all; and as the progreſs became evident, and the ear once more familiarized to ſimple tunes, the whole might be brought

* Dr. Brown.

† The Parochial Muſic in Lancaſhire is ſaid to be performed ſuitably to its intention almoſt univerſally. If the Clergy in that part of the kingdom had given an account by what means ſo deſirable an object has been obtained there, this work would have been ſuperfluous.

brought to join in a ſervice, at once captivating and meritorious.

Without building too much upon a plan of this ſort, we may at leaſt ſay it is not impracticable. And though various other means might be pointed out to effect the purpoſe; it is perhaps better to leave the remainder to the diſcretion of every pious Miniſter, who may know beſt what methods to adopt, and what opportunities to embrace, than to preſume to dictate, where we have only a right to perſuade. But were the buſineſs once effected, I am perſuaded we ſhould have no more complaints of the tedium of public worſhip, much fewer inſtances of deſertion to Sectariſts, much fuller congregations, and more benefits conferred upon them.

In the congregations of the Metropolis and great towns, much doubt is to be made, whether the example or exhortation of the Miniſter could prevail. The leading members of the pariſh are uſually more rich and powerful than the paſtor; ridicule might be thrown upon the attempt in its outſet, and if that was ſucceſsful, the combat againſt habit, and uſage, would be too unequal to be maintained to advantage.

On this account, it would be prudent rather to apply the means we have, than to attempt any new method with the pariſhioners themſelves.

With

With this view, the correction of the charity children muſt be the firſt and principal object; and to effect this, we want only the aſſiſtance of the Pariſh clerk, the School-maſter, and the Organiſt.

If the united efforts of theſe were employed, the evil complained of would be remedied without difficulty. The School-maſter is uſually the inſtructor in Muſic, but always attendant on them at church, and the regulator of their conduct there. Might not he be brought, by the perſuaſions of the Miniſter, to ſee that his own credit, and the advantage of the inſtitution were concerned in an alteration on this head? And is not every maſter ſenſible of the conſtant complaints againſt the obſtreperous manner of the childrens making the reſponſes, and the over-ſtrained exertion of their pipe in the pſalm?

I grant that the reſponſes are to be audible, but it is no reaſon becauſe the congregation is too low, that the children are to be loud. The medium is eaſy to conceive, and eaſier to eſtabliſh, and when eſtabliſhed would contribute greatly to the decorum of public worſhip.

In regard to the Pſalms, if they were *practiſed* to the pitch that was proper for the Church, the firſt difficulty is removed. The utmoſt ſtretch of the

the voice, is not the moſt pleaſing part of it. Even in the fineſt, it cauſes admiration more frequently than delight; and there is ſtill another difference between height and loudneſs. It has been thought by ſome, that the violent exertion of ſuch boys as can ſing, and the full organ, may contribute to drown the imperfections of the younger children, who are not ſufficiently inſtructed. If this is really the caſe, it were better that the uninſtructed were reſtrained entirely, till they could join with correctneſs, than to ſuffer their deficiency to ſpoil the whole.

There is an harmonious compaſs in almoſt every ſingle voice, but if not, certainly in every collection of human voices; what this is, the inſtructor muſt know better than it is in my power to point out; and when this is found, to keep the children within the limits of it, can be a taſk of no great difficulty.

The teacher is likewiſe to recollect, that the children are in the ſervice of the public—that their ſupport depends chiefly upon the congregation, to which they are attached; and therefore the congregation has a right to demand from them, a conduct on this head, which is not obſtreperous or offenſive. It is their duty to lead, but not to drown the voices of ſuch as are diſpoſed to join. And if they were confined abſolutely

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and entirely to this pitch, they would become not merely ornamental to the Church as an exhibition of benevolence, but an uſeful and eſſential part of the congregation.

One method of obtaining better inſtruction for them, would be, by deſiring leave of the Miniſter and Church-wardens, for them to come to Church half an hour before the ſervice commences; during which time they might practiſe or rehearſe with the organ, an opportunity which they rarely, if ever, have in the ſchool, and which would conduce much to promote the alterations neceſſary to be introduced. It is not impoſſible, that rehearſals of this kind ſhould attract ſeveral of the pariſhioners, and if ſuch attendance ſhould once become habitual, it would contribute more to forward a general knowledge of Muſic, and affection to it, than any other method which could be deviſed.

The effect of ſuch a rehearſal in regard to the children themſelves, may be eſtimated by the ſucceſs of that attendance, which they give at St. Paul's previous to the annual meeting, where one or two rehearſals, added to the inſtruction of the ſchool, produces a degree of accuracy, which is not uſually ſuppoſed to be attainable by the ear alone.

If the charity children were, by theſe means, or any other, reduced once more into order, and made to perform with propriety, a rational and animating part of the public ſervice, it is to be preſumed that many of the audience would delight to join in an office no longer grating and diſguſtful. And when once a ſenſe of harmony and pleaſure was excited, the addition of freſh voices would go on encreaſing, till the junction became general and univerſal. Many in every London congregation are always qualified by a knowledge of the ſcience, many would acquire a taſte for it by habit and uſage. And every one bleſſed with the humbleſt degree of ear might attain it, if it was an object of deſire and ſatisfaction.

Much aſſiſtance might be given to this good work by the ſelection of a judicious Pariſh clerk; or where it ſhould happen that he was attached to old cuſtoms, the Miniſter might eaſily interfere with efficacy and ſucceſs.

But much more might be expected from the attention of a ſkilful Organiſt; and the love of the ſcience, it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, would be a ſufficient inducement with moſt of them, to contribute their aſſiſtance. The additional trouble of attending a rehearſal before ſervice, few of them would complain of, and were that the caſe,

a ſmall preſent ſum might compenſate their attendance; till upon a demiſe, or freſh election, it were made part of their agreement.

I apprehend under the preſent ſyſtem, the organ is generally too loud, and ſings too little; this is a complaint every where rectified in the Methodiſt aſſemblies, and the effect is viſible. It might likewiſe be requeſted of the Organiſt, in the performance of the prelude, to play the tune once over, quite plain, without variations, immediately previous to the commencement of the Pſalm; and this alone would give every tolerable ear, the opportunity of acquiring both the time and tune.

It is with the utmoſt deference I give any opinion relative to Muſic; but there is one alteration which, if it could be effected without detracting from ſolemnity, the propoſal of it is to be hazarded. That is; *playing the original pſalm tunes to ſomewhat quicker time*;—it ſeems probable (if other objections do not ſtand in the way) that this would facilitate the perception of the ear, and enliven the ſenſations of the mind; both which are objects of conſequence, if they can be obtained without incurring cenſures of another kind.

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In thoſe congregations of the Metropolis where there are neither children or organ, it muſt be confeſſed that the cauſe is almoſt hopeleſs. The Clerk commences his ſtave, and goes through it almoſt wholly unaccompanied, or perhaps joined towards the cloſe, by the feeble efforts of a ſingle voice or two, in a manner ſufficiently indicating the feelings of timidity. This is the natural reſult of that diffidence which reſtains every one from ſtanding up as a profeſſed ſinger. He would be glad to join in a general ſtrain, but can ſcarce perſuade himſelf to ſet an example to others.

In this place it may not be improper to ſay a word on the uſage of ſitting or ſtanding while the Pſalm is performing. The Rubric preſcribes nothing on this head; and though ſtanding may be the more proper poſture on the occaſion, ſtill it is, if required, an obſtacle of weight in the very point, where every difficulty ought to be removed. Natural diffidence is a ſufficient check in itſelf, without the addition of other impediments, and this is a diffidence which the female part of the congregation will never ſurmount;—why then is a point to be made of any particular poſture to the excluſion of thoſe voices, which in places where all ſing, form the fineſt and ſweeteſt part of the general harmony?

It is no ſingular opinion to maintain, that laying any injunction upon the people which the Rubric has not preſcribed, is an uſurpation; and if this uſurpation is moreover attended with inconveniences or bad conſequences, it is time to abandon it. Our firſt buſineſs is to revive a reliſh for this duty, by any lawful means in our power; and where a congregation has been once brought to take a pleaſure in it, and experience its effects, we may truſt to their own feelings and the warmth of their own hearts afterwards, that every thing decent and ſuitable to the occaſion, will follow of courſe from their own ſuggeſtions.

Theſe reflections may have been extended perhaps beyond their proper bounds, but it is not poſſible to cloſe them, without mentioning the hopes which are opened by the inſtitution of Sunday Schools. From the ſpirit with which this undertaking has commenced, it ſeems more than probable, that the numbers inſtructed in this form, will greatly exceed all that are comprehended in all the other modes of education. It is poſſible that it ſhould extend to the whole lower claſs throughout the kingdom; that the time is approaching when every individual who does not wilfully refuſe the bleſſing, ſhall be enabled to read the Scripture for himſelf. What then forbids ſome humble attempt to be made towards the inſtruction of theſe children in pſalmody? If the

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deſign ſhould ſucceed to its full extent, here may be opened the means of rendering the whole body of the lower people capable of feeling and joining in this ſervice. Very ſmall attention in the Pariſh clerk, where he is capable of teaching, might effect this inſtruction in their infancy, which in manhood would contribute to the honour of religion, the decency of public worſhip, and the advancement of general edification.

METRICAL COMPOSITION.

IT is a deſirable object, if it could be obtained, to reſtore all thoſe parts of the ſervice originally intended for Muſic, to the uſage and practice of the Primitive Church. It has been hinted above, that a ſimple chant, if it could once be recommended to general or national approbation, might be employed to reſtore propriety to the performance of the Pſalms and Hymns, which are now only read, inſtead of being ſung alternately, as was the original cuſtom of the Church.

But though this is true in theory, much doubt is to be made, whether any attempt to deviate from the preſent practice on this head, might not offend from the idea of innovation, or might not produce confuſion and ridicule, before the people themſelves were diſpoſed to adopt it, from their

their own feeling and improvement. How far any particular congregations might be inclined to make an experiment of this kind, muſt be left to themſelves, and the opportunities time may produce. The object of this tract goes no farther at preſent, than to reſtore plain pſalm-ſinging to its uſe and rank in the public ſervice; if that were once effected, and the people willing to go farther, it is better to truſt to their inclination, than to preſcribe to them on this ſubject.

It is ſaid that there is a natural propenſity in ſome nations * to Muſic, more than others; but whether this propenſity is in nature, or not rather the effect of habit, early education, and familiarizing the ear to muſical ſounds, may be diſputed. It is certainly not *pre-eminently* the natural taſte of our own people; but if it is a talent acquirable by education, that education muſt have a commencement.

That the people have not attained, or, rather, have loſt their reliſh for Parochial Muſic, is owing partly to the cauſes of diſguſt already enumerated, and partly to the poorneſs of metrical compoſition appropriated to this uſe.

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* The Bohemians are ſaid to perform the whole of the ſervice which requires Muſic, by the ear.

In the verſification of Sternhold and Hopkins * there are few ſtanzas which do not give offence or excite ridicule. This failing, however, is not imputable to the poets, but to the age. The cenſure of verſe,—the cadence produced by accent,—the power and eaſe of expreſſion,—the preciſion of rhyme, were all points little underſtood at a period, when the language had not yet been taught to feel its own powers, or its materials rendered tractable by fabrication. Many inaccuracies likewiſe of other kinds offenſive to our ears, were probably not unpleaſing to our anceſtors. But if from the improvement of our language, or the refinement of our knowledge, the whole is become unfit for its office. The dictates of reaſon and the ſervice of religion require, that it ſhould now be diſcarded, and ſome ſubſtitute prepared to ſupply its place. To this, there is little obſtruction, but the expence of purchaſing a ſufficient number of copies of the new verſion for the uſe of country congregations, and if the pariſh would make the firſt purchaſe at the general expence, the ſupply could be afterwards eaſily kept up at the charge of individuals.

The new verſon of Brady and Tate is priviledged by royal authority, and " Though not ex-
" cellent,

* Dr. Brown.

" cellent, is not intolerable," in the opinion of a competent judge *. Poſſibly we might with juſtice go a ſtep farther, and ſay,—that ſome degree of faſtidiouſneſs has been indulged, in judging this verſion. There is certainly nothing in it to offend the ear, and little to revolt the underſtanding. Theſe qualifications are ſufficient to recommend it for popular uſe, nor ought we to expect high ſtrains of poetry or perfect compoſition in works of this kind; if the beſt poets of the laſt age had contributed to form a verſion, it would not have given univerſal ſatisfaction. Brady and Tate, though not poets †, are by no means intolerable verſifiers.

But if pſalmody was once reſtored to its original rank and eſtimation, it would become an object of regard to the ruling powers, to have this whole matter reconſidered and reviſed. In that caſe, it would not be difficult to form a collection from different authors, which might carry this point as near perfection, as is requiſite. There is a verſion by King James I. which Mr. Pope commends, and is worthy of his commendation; there is another by Sandys; an excellent one

* Dr. Brown.

† The chief objection to their verſion is the loſs of the metre adapted to the Muſic of the old 104th Pſalm.—There is only one Pſalm in the new verſion to that metre, and that one of the pooreſt in the collection.

one by Dr. Merrick; there are detached pſalms in Milton, and other authors; all which might be examined and appreciated, and a whole formed which would do honour to our own, or any other Church; and if ſuch a ſelection were once ſanctioned by Epiſcopal and Royal authority, it would come to the people with every proſpect of producing all the reformation that is deſired.

Such a work as this, would contribute to form a national taſte, as well as promote the national religion, nor is it impoſſible that with ſuitable encouragement religious Muſic ſhould again enter into the recreation of domeſtic leiſure, and revive the ſentiments of primitive Religion. Then alſo an opportunity might offer, for once more calling in the aid of freſh Muſical compoſition, which new metres might require, or the ſimplicity of the preſent metres could admit; but nothing of this ſort can be attempted till many of the previous points are eſtabliſhed.

In regard to Hymns and all compoſitions not authorized by the Church, great caution is required. The extravagancies introduced by ſome of the ſectariſts on this head, ought to be a ſufficient warning how we deviate from the eſtabliſhed cuſtom. The Church of England, in compliance with the principles of the reforma-

tion, has reſtricted † us to the uſe of ſcripture language. And where this has not been the caſe, and men have indulged their private fancies, you may find a text of ſcripture indeed at the head of the Hymn or in the margin; but the induction from it in the body, wandering into the wildeſt licences, recommendatory of particular tenets; and glaring contradictions, confounding the perſpicuity of the text.

That miſchief of this ſort might be introduced into the Eſtabliſhed Church, is much to be apprehended, if any compoſitions of individuals were admitted into the public ſervice. And if private families were diſpoſed to adopt any of theſe for their recreation, there are few worthy of recommendation, except thoſe of Dr. Watts.

Upon the whole it is much ſafer and more conſonant to the principles of a reformed Church, to confine ourſelves wholly to the Pſalms of David; and what ſubject of Religion is there which theſe cannot ſupply? Penitence, contrition, prayer, praiſe, and thankſgiving are here prepared ready for our uſe; and as we allow theſe compoſitions to proceed from Divine inſpiration, what more can we require? Dr. Watts ‡, however,

† Dr. Brown.
‡ Preface to Watts's Hymns.

ever, is of opinion, that the ſentiments of David are not always ſuitable to our wants, or hopes, nor arrive at the pitch, Chriſtian knowledge aſpires to. But for the firſt, a remedy may be found by proper ſelection; and for the laſt, it is better to bear an inconvenience, which Revelation has not vouchſafed to remove, than to fly to uncertain expedients of our own. Chriſt has no where ſupplied this ſuppoſed deficience of David, and if a diſpenſation of this kind had been abſolutely requiſite for his Church, we may reaſonably conclude he would have granted it.

Nothing here ſaid is meant, however, to argue againſt the uſe of private Hymns by private perſons, or to diſcredit thoſe who have employed their talents in compoſing them. The purity of public worſhip is the ſole object of theſe reflections. But if a taſte for Religious Muſic ſhould ever pervade the retirement of domeſtic life, how profitably and rationally might the tedious hours of Sunday be paſſed in amuſements of this ſuperior caſt?

Where the ſeveral members of a family are attached to Muſic, (as is the caſe in many inſtances at preſent) what higher gratification can the maſter of it propoſe, than ſeeing his children and dependants form a choir to the glory of their Creator?

In the exerciſe of ſuch a ſervice as this, every man has a right to ſelect for his private uſage, whatever is conſonant to ſound Religion and Morality; the Church allows this principle in the article of prayer; praiſe and thankſgiving are doubtleſs entitled to an equal privilege.

CONCLUSION.

THE hints thrown out in this ſhort treatiſe, it is hoped, will give no offence to any of the Clergy as appearing to proceed from an arrogant or dictatorial ſpirit, a love of cenſure, or a deſire of innovation. The author hopes he has expreſſed the ſentiments of every rational and ſober-minded Miniſter: he truſts that all equally lament the loſs of this edifying and uſeful part of public worſhip, and that any attempt towards reſtoring it to its original eſtimation and primitive ſimplicity, will prove acceptable to every member of our Communion. It is at leaſt a favourable opportunity to make the effort, and if the ſubject is once brought into contemplation, and the cauſe not given up as hopeleſs, men of better underſtanding and more knowledge will be induced to give their thoughts to the public. If the ſpirit of the people were once raiſed, the adoption of ſome ſyſtem like this would ſoon become general.

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The decency and propriety of public worſhip is an object of high conſequence in every well regulated community; the people may be driven from Church by diſguſt, their attachment may be rendered inviolable by conſulting their rational delight. No means are more proper, more conſonant to Religion than the reſtoration of Parochial Muſic. It is a bond of union, a centre of attraction, a ſource of intellectual pleaſure. Thoſe who come to join in praiſes, muſt join in prayer alſo,—muſt hear the word of God read and expounded to them, and muſt partake of all thoſe benefits which public devotion and public worſhip confer.

To the Clergy exhortation is ſuperfluous, or perhaps arrogant; but to the Pariſh clerks as a body, to the Maſters of charity ſchools, or the Inſtructors of the children in Muſic, ſome application may be eſſentially uſeful. Every friend to thoſe inſtitutions muſt be deſirous of rendering them as worthy of public notice and regard as poſſible; their ſupport depends upon public contributions, and in an age when charities are grown ſo numerous,—when many have the charms of novelty and the ſpirit of the firſt propoſers to recommend them, it is doing no ſmall ſervice to theſe ſeminaries, if we can recall the attention of the world to them, by placing their utility in a new light, and give a new cauſe

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for ſatisfaction, in making them contribute to the decorum of public Worſhip, and the good of Religion.

And finally, a word ought to be addreſſed to the body of the people;—it is their pleaſure, advantage, and edification, which is the principal object of every thing that has been ſaid. Their general attachment to the Eſtabliſhed Church is ſufficiently evident, and nothing but a ſenſe of deference to that, could have induced them to bear with the improprieties above ſpecified; their concurrence is eſſentially neceſſary to a reformation, and could they be once perſuaded that the whole difficulty conſiſts in the firſt attempt, that the alteration itſelf is eaſy and natural, and the reſult finally contributory to their own ſatisfaction, we need not doubt of their aſſiſtance in affecting ſo deſirable a change.

The manners of the age are favourable to the deſign;—Muſic was never better underſtood as a ſcience, or more ſought after as an inſtrument of intellectual delight. There is ſcarce a public charity which has not been benefited by its effects, its reputation has not ſatiated, its reſources are inexhauſtible. What we approve in public, we may bring home to ourſelves; what

what we purſue as a gratification, we may render ſerviceable to our ſpiritual welfare; and if the ſpirit ſhould once go forth, our Church may become as illuſtrious for Sacred harmony, and Religious decorum, as for Chriſtian purity and genuine Faith.

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